

Article Alert

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The books, articles, and web sites described in the Article Alert present a diversity of views in order to keep our IRC users abreast of current issues and concerns in the United States. These items represent the views and opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect official U.S. Government policy.

Disaster Relief Online Reference Resources

http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/hurricane_katrina.html

Coast Guard Disaster Recovery Assistance
<http://www.uscgstormwatch.com/external/index.cfm?cid=1008>

The United States Coast Guard is one of the U.S.'s five Armed Services. Its mission is to protect the public, the environment, and U.S. economic interests - in the nation's ports and waterways, along the coast, and in international waters. This site provides information related to the Coast Guard's Hurricane Katrina response effort.

Corporation for National and Community Service
<http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/donations/index.asp>
In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the Corporation for National and Community Service is coordinating volunteers across the country to assist with repair and relief efforts in areas affected by this devastating storm.

Federal Emergency Management Agency
<http://www.fema.gov/>
FEMA is part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Its purpose is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident.

Voice of America News
<http://www.voanews.com/english/katrina.cfm>
VOA is a multimedia international broadcasting service funded by the U.S. government. VOA broadcasts more than 1,000 hours of news, information, educational, and cultural programming every week to an estimated worldwide audience of more than 100 million people.

FirstGov Hurricane Katrina Recovery
http://www.firstgov.gov/Citizen/Topics/PublicSafety/Hurricane_Katrina_Recovery.shtml
FirstGov.gov is an easy-to-search, free-access website designed to give a centralized place to find information from U.S. local, state and federal government agency websites. FirstGov provides links to many sites related to Hurricane Katrina recovery including extensive "safe" lists and electronic message boards where family members can post information about missing persons.

USA Freedom Corps
<http://www.usafreedomcorps.gov/>
USA Freedom Corps is an office at the White House created by President Bush to help more Americans engage in volunteer service. Much of the relief for victims of Hurricane Katrina will come from private citizens who volunteer their time, talents, and financial resources. USA Freedom Corps is working with partners in the non-profit and national service community to inform Americans how they can help and to ensure that all aid, including volunteers and private giving, is collected and delivered in an effective manner.

NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)
http://www.nasa.gov/vision/earth/lookingatearth/gulfcoast_flood.html
NASA is the civilian agency responsible for America's space program and general aerospace research. This link shows satellite views of the area affected by Hurricane Katrina before and after the storm.

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Information Resource Center

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Copies of articles listed in *IRC's Article Alert* are available from the Information Resource Center, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy Jakarta. Should you wish to receive a photocopy of an article, please complete the ARTICLE ALERT REQUEST FORM (page 3) and return it to us. We will mail or fax the requested articles directly to you, at no cost.

DEMOCRACY & HUMAN RIGHTS

1. A Government Out of Touch

By John Cochran, *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, vol. 63, no. 27, July 4, 2005, pp. 1804-1811.

Cochran, a staff writer for CQ Weekly Report, describes the chasm between public concerns and the issues discussed and legislated in Congress. Special interest groups, changes in redistricting which carve out clear Republican or Democratic winners, and changes within the political parties have moved the discourse from middle of the road public concerns to the concerns of the fringes on both sides. Polls are now used to figure out how to package special interest group policies rather than address the public's concerns. The article describes theories of political scientists to improve the current situation.

2. With God on Our Side?

By Jim Wallis and Susan Jacoby, *American Prospect*, vol. 16, no. 8, August, 2005, pp. 43-46.

Wallis, activist and author of *God's Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It*, discusses various groups who feel left out by both political parties. He contends that the media has covered religion and politics in a problematic way for the Democrats, accusing Democrats who talk about faith of pandering to conservatives. Wallis avers that both the secular fundamentalists, who want to keep faith out of the public sphere entirely, and the religious fundamentalists who want to impose their orthodoxy on the Republican Party and the nation stand in the way of progress. Most powerful reform movements have been shaped by spiritual and moral values; however, Wallis notes that "theocratic visions of morality can be a threat to democratic politics."

3. W. Bush's Judiciary: The First Term Record

By Sheldon Goldman, et al., *Judicature*, vol. 88, no. 6, May-June 2005, pp. 244-275

The authors provide a comparative look at President Bush's judicial selection and those of the last four U.S.

presidents, while analyzing the politics of appointments and confirmations using first-hand accounts of the process as their guide. The authors discuss at the length the Bush administration's process of identifying and vetting candidates for federal judgeships, and parse out the roles of the various players within the White House, Department of Justice, think tanks and other organizations in the process. The article also explains the congressional confirmation process with a timely discussion of issues such as recess appointments and the "nuclear issue." The article also contains several interesting side bars, including biographies of Bush nominees as well as statistics on judicial diversity. This is an excellent primer on the political and practical process of judicial nominations."

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND TRADE

4. Managing Risk In an Unstable World

By Ian Bremmer, *Harvard Business Review*, vol. 83, no. 6, June 2005, pp. 51-60.

Bremmer, president of a political risk consulting firm, says emerging markets and politically unstable countries are figuring more than ever into corporate investment calculations. Consequently, business leaders are turning more to political risk analysis to measure the impact of politics on potential markets, minimize risks, and make the most of global opportunities. Political risk is more subjective than economic risk, he explains, because it is influenced by so many factors, such as the passage of laws, weaknesses of government leaders, and the rise of popular movements. Increasing globalization demands more rigorous assessments of political risk, he writes, and has led to development of tools for measuring and presenting stability data. One tool uses 20 composite indicators to rank countries on a scale of 0 (a failed state) to 100 (a fully institutionalized, stable democracy). The rising importance of political risk analysis to company success requires analysts with a strong mix of skills; timely, accurate data on a variety of social and political trends, and a framework for evaluating the impact of individual risks on overall stability, says Bremmer.

5. The State of Globalization

By Juergen Stark, *International Economy*, vol. 19, no. 2, Spring 2005, pp. 52-70.

Stark, Deputy Governor of the Deutsche Bundesbank, notes that since the 1990s an increasing proportion of global economic activity is market-determined. Major centrally planned economies have turned into market economies and several strongly regulated emerging market economies have implemented radical reforms. Realistically, he adds, the United States and Asia will remain the centers of gravity of the global economy in the coming years. The impact the growing range of low-cost goods and services produced in the Far East will lead to significant changes in global production patterns, trade, and relative prices, he writes, and with that will come an increasing risk of countries responding with protectionist measures. Adjustments to these changing economic dynamics will likely include new alliances and relationships, says Stark. To optimize Europe's place in this changing world economy, he recommends that the European Union deepen its political integration and instill a clear vision of its future.

6. America's Total Economic Engagement With the Developing World: Rethinking the Uses and Nature of Foreign Aid

By Carol C. Adelman, Jeremiah Norris; Jean Weicher, *Hudson Institute, White Paper*, 28 June 2005, 7 pp.

Claims that America is "stingy" with aid abound, despite the fact that Americans privately give more than three and one-half times as much international aid as the U.S. government, note the authors. They also point out that the U.S. has the most overseas investment, provides the most military support for global disasters and security, produces the bulk of the world's research and development for better food and medicines, and provides preferential trade agreements that support imports from developing countries. The authors provide data on the full spectrum of U.S. assistance, explain why Official Development Assistance doesn't reflect the realities of aid today, and analyze the limitations of direct aid and what is really needed to overcome poverty in the developing world.

GLOBAL ISSUES/ INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

7. The Birth of Google

By John Battelle, *Wired*, vol. 13, no. 8, August 2005.

On first meeting, Larry Page and Sergey Brin disliked one another. Yet within a year their partnership spawned Google, arguably the world's most popular search engine. At Stanford University, Page devised a crawler, originally called BackRub, tracing the path of links back from web pages. Collaborating with fellow graduate student Brin, he went on to develop PageRank, an algorithm assigning a higher ranking to more "important" pages. With

PageRank, BackRub yielded superior results to existing search engines based largely on keywords. Google was not born without a struggle, however. Both young men experienced some doubts, while coincidentally discovering how much power a growing search engine drains from a computer network. At one point, BackRub was consuming nearly half of Stanford's entire bandwidth, often bringing the university's Internet connection to a standstill. Thanks to some improvisation, and a "forward-looking" environment at Stanford, Google became a hit. This article is part of a feature, "10 Years That Changed the World," on the history of the World Wide Web. Available online at <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/13.08/battelle.html>

8. The Dotcom King and the Rooftop Solar Evolution

By Spencer Reiss, *Wired*, vol. 13, no. 7, July 2005.

Most of the entrepreneurs of the Internet boom of the 1990s have moved on to other things, but Bill Gross, founder of Idealab, the Pasadena, California-based high-tech incubator, is still going strong. Idealab's latest innovation: a low-cost, downsized, lightweight, rooftop-mountable solar concentrator, consisting of a field of movable mirrors in a two-metre-square frame, that focus sunlight on an elevated silicon wafer, generating electric power at double the efficiency of flat photovoltaic panels. Several prototypes are being subjected to accelerated-aging tests, to see how the sophisticated machinery and electronics hold up to the elements. The first shipment of 1000 units from a low-cost offshore manufacturer will be delivered in the fall. Solar energy has the greatest potential to revolutionize how mankind obtains energy, notes the author, but it has also been the most challenging to harness. The solar industry's long-term strategy is to maintain government financial incentives for users to obtain solar equipment and keep it competitive with coal, gas and nuclear power. As technological improvements and large-scale manufacturing lower the costs, the author predicts that the market for solar "will explode." Available online at <http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/13.07/solar.html>

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

9. The Media As an Instrument of War

By Kenneth Payne, *Parameters*, vol. 35, no. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 81-93.

Payne, a BBC news producer, examines the effect of the media on international conflicts. In the Iraq War, a method employed by the U.S. military to influence the media included embedding reporters in specific military units, in order to give them a small-scale view of the battlefield and encourage camaraderie between the military and journalists. Central Command briefings were also offered to give reporters a big picture of the battle, as presented by senior military personnel. This article is currently available on the Internet at: <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/parameters/05spring/payne.htm>

U.S. SOCIETY AND VALUES

10. All in the Family

By Victoria Looseleaf, *Dance Magazine*, vol. 79, no. 7, July 2005, pp. 42-44.

The author profiles Joseph and Josette Wiggan, an Afro-American brother/sister tap-dancing duo, who have been performing together for ten years. Joseph, 19, and Josette, 22, are both enrolled in college during the academic year, and dance together professionally during the summer. They will continue to perform as a team after they graduate. Josette is also working with a group to end modern-day slavery around the world, while Joseph is preparing to manage a dance company.

11. Grant Wood's Family Album

By Sue Taylor, *American Art*, vol. 19, no. 2, Summer 2005.

Artist Grant Wood is best known for his painting AMERICAN GOTHIC, depicting a man with a pitchfork standing next to a younger woman in front of a farmhouse. The models for this painting were his beloved sister, Nan Wood Graham, and his dentist, Byron McKeeby. The article

provides an overview of Wood's works and his life story, dealing mainly with his childhood. The author sees the woman in his most famous painting as a stand-in for his mother, Hattie, and the man as a stand-in for his father, Francis Maryville Wood, who died when the artist-to-be was ten years old. The author says that "although not portrait likenesses, the immediately familiar Midwestern figures are parental images; as such, they evoke universal, even primal responses, typically covered over by the spirited humor of the picture's myriad, mocking iterations".

12. The American Planet

By Nick D'alto, *American History*, vol. 40, no. 4, October 2005, pp. 29-36.

During the depths of the Great Depression, shy American farm boy and self-taught astronomer Clyde Tombaugh discovered a tiny planet that came to be known as Pluto. The news stirred the country's imagination, sparking a wave of 'plutomania' and inspiring new generation of Astronomers.

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